

Mr. Chairman, my amendment requires the Department of Defense to limit their spend on motorsports sponsorships for NASCAR, the National Hot Rod Association, the Indy Car Series, or AMA Super Bike Racing to no more than \$20 million in Fiscal Year 2012.

With our nation is in a fiscal crisis I can't imagine anyone wanting to spend more than \$20 million for taxpayer funded racing teams.

As Members of Congress we need to make choices with the American taxpayers' money.

Congress needs to set priorities that will reduce the deficit and grow our economy.

This year, the Department of Defense will spend at least \$63 million in taxpayer funds to sponsor motorsports for so-called "recruitment" purposes.

In the last decade, hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars have been spent to sponsor motorsports racing.

And, what do the American people get for that investment?

Those millions of tax dollars buy decals – big stickers -- on race cars. And they pay for multi-million dollar contracts for millionaire racecar drivers and racing team owners.

For example, the National Guard is currently spending \$20 million in taxpayer funds to sponsor one racecar driver!

At a time when our nation is fighting two wars and facing a federal fiscal crisis: Why are we

borrowing money from China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia to pay for sponsorships of millionaire car drivers?

How does that advance national security?

Many of my colleagues insist that these sponsorships are critical to the survival of our all-volunteer military.

I disagree, but I respect their passion despite the fact that there is no demonstrable proof this motorsports program is effective.

That's why my amendment maintains a significant and sufficient investment in motorsports sponsorships – \$20 million –to allow the Pentagon to demonstrate that it works.

As Members of Congress, we must do a better job of exercising oversight of the Pentagon's recruiting budget.

Right now, 75% of young Americans ages 17 to 24 years old are not qualified – let me repeat – not qualified to serve in the Armed Forces.

Motorsports sponsorships is not the answer to making America's youth more physically fit or more academically prepared to serve.

According to a 2010 report by retired military leaders, entitled "Too Fat to Fight," the U.S. military faces serious long-term recruiting challenges.

Let me quote the report directly:

"When weight problems are combined with educational deficits, criminal records, and other disqualifiers such as asthma or drug abuse, 75 percent of Americans 17 to 24 year olds are unable to join the military for one or more reasons. The military will need to have more fit young men and women if it is going to find enough recruits with the excellent qualifications needed for a modern military."

But we're not talking about \$63 million to sponsor academic decathlons, soccer leagues, or baseball teams.

With these alarming trends facing America's young people, the Pentagon needs to be leading a national effort to ensure young people around this country, from coast to coast, are educationally prepared, physically fit, morally sound, and dedicated to serving their country.

Those young men and women aren't just found at racetracks, and yet some branches of our military are spending disproportionate amounts of their recruiting budgets on an increasingly small number of recruiting targets.

Here's an example of motorsports' supposed recruiting power:

In 2010, the Air National Guard spent \$645,000 to sponsor a single NASCAR race: the "Air Guard 400".

According to the Air National Guard, that \$650,000 sponsorship generated 439 recruitment leads.

Only six of those leads were qualified leads or eligible recruits.

How many enlistments for \$650,000? – zero! Zero enlistments!

Other branches of the Armed Forces have found these sponsorships to be a waste of money.

The Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Navy all cancelled their motorsports sponsorships years ago, shifting their valuable recruitment dollars to more effective programs.

I respect the patriotism and passion of motorsports fans.

And I encourage the U.S. military to continue its longstanding relationship with motorsports like NASCAR.

This amendment does nothing to the additional \$8 million the Army spends on outreach at NASCAR racing events or the millions more spent on military recruitment at races.

But we are wasting precious taxpayer dollars on race cars and their millionaire drivers – with little or nothing to show for it.

I have heard supporters of racing sponsorships talk about the "passion points" and "media impressions" these sponsorship dollars produce among television viewers.

Really! Americans don't know there is an Army or an Air Force. The American people don't know we are at war in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya?

They don't need a race car to tell them we have a volunteer military and our country is at war.

Already this year, this Republican Congress has voted for cuts to nutrition programs for poor, hungry women and infants.

This majority is cutting investments in energy efficiency at a time of high gas prices.

This majority has proposed cuts to programs serving homeless veterans.

Military recruitment in a volunteer fighting force is critical, but spending more than \$63 million for the sponsorship of motor racing at a time of fiscal crisis is not a good use of taxpayer money.

I urge my colleague to support this amendment and limit the sponsorship of motor racing to \$20 million.